



Gearing Up For Your Transitions

Adaptive Driving

A vehicle is American symbol of independence. When you have a disability, driving may seem like an impossible dream. It is not possible to accommodate all disabilities, however there are a number of vehicle adaptations that can make driving a reality. New technology continues to broaden opportunities for people with disabilities to drive vehicles with adaptive devices.

Things to consider when selecting a vehicle:

How wide are the doors.

Is there storage space for wheelchairs and other mobility aides?

Can I drive my wheelchair or scooter into the van?

Is there an adaptive driver's training facility in Delaware?

How easy will it be to put adaptations on a vehicle and what would be the cost?

Can I buy a vehicle that is already equip with adaptive devices?

The costs of modifying a vehicle vary. Modifying a new vehicle with adaptive equipment can cost anywhere from \$20,000-\$80,000. It is of the utmost importance to investigate opportunities through the private and public sector for financial assistance before purchasing a vehicle.

If you are considering buying a new vehicle or making modifications to one you own, contact the Delaware Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to inquire about possible funding that is offered to individuals with disabilities.

Delaware Department of Vocational Rehabilitation New Castle County

Herman M. Holloway, Sr. Campus

[Biggs Building](#)

1901 North DuPont Highway

New Castle, DE 19720

Voice: (302) 255-9800

TDD: (302) 255-9854

Kent and Sussex County Counties

[Milford State Service Center - Annex](#)

13 SW Front Street

Milford, DE 19963

Voice: (302) 424-7240

If you are a disabled veteran, contact the Department of Veterans Affairs to see if they can assist.

You could also check with your private health insurance to see if they would cover adapted devices and vehicle modifications.

Many manufactures have reimbursement plans for new modified vehicles. List from DATI

For information regarding DATI funding and advocacy issues, please contact the DATI Central Site:

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative

Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative Central Site
College of Education and Human Development
University of Delaware
461 Wyoming Road
Newark, DE 19716
302-831-0354 (Voice)
800- 870-DATI (3284) (Voice/TTY)
[Email DATI](#)

For questions regarding equipment demonstrations and short-term loans, personal AT options, or to speak with an AT Specialist, contact your local ATRC:

New Castle County ATRC

College of Education and Human Development
University of Delaware
461 Wyoming Road
Newark, DE 19716
302-831-0354 (Voice)
800- 870-DATI (3284) (Voice/TTY)
New Castle County ATRC

Easter Seals Kent County Center
100 Enterprise Place, Suite 1
Dover, DE 19904-8200
(302) 739-6885; (302) 739-6886 (TDD)
[Email Kent ATRC](#)

Sussex Country ATRC

20123 Office Circle
Georgetown, DE 19947
(302) 856-7946; (302) 856-6714 (TDD)
[Email Sussex ATRC](#)

You may be eligible for a medical tax deduction on your federal income tax return for the expenses you incurred for the adapted devices.

Currently, Delaware does not have a driver rehabilitation specialist if you are interested in locating one [The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists](#) will assist you in finding one in your area. A driver rehabilitation specialist completes an evaluation to determine a list of recommendation for vehicle modifications. On their website they have a number of fact sheets located under resources to help you determine what they look for in their comprehensive evaluations

Vehicle Adaptations

There are many adaptations that can make driving a reality if you have a disability. However, it may not be possible to accommodate every type of disability so one can drive. The following is a partial list of Vehicle Adaptive Devices:

Electronic Hand Controls: If one cannot drive safely with their legs hand controls can allow the driver to control the gas and brakes. They are different styles and they work in different ways for the individual that needs them.

Left Foot Gas Pedals: In the event someone's disability affects one side of their body, such as their right side, a left foot gas pedal can be installed so the driver can use the gas and or brake pedals.

Foot Pedal Extensions: If the driver is of shorter stature then extensions for the gas and brake pedals can be installed.

Spinner Knob: This is a knob that a driver can hold with one so they can steer the car if they have a hard time holding the steering wheel. (In some states spinner knobs are illegal because they are used in drag racing to make tight turns, so you might need a doctor's written statement for this adaptation.)

Power Seats: Special Power seats that rotate towards the door and lift up or down to make transferring and getting in and out of the car seat easier.

Spinner Seats: Move with ease when getting in and out of the driver's seat.

Scooter & Wheelchair Hoists: Lift Scooters and Wheelchairs into modified vans.

Indicator Extensions: Extend the turn signal arms.

Easy release hand brakes: Make it easier to utilize parking brakes when needed.

Easy Release Gear shift: Assist in the changing of gears in your vehicle.

Roof Stowage Systems: Allow for stowage of medical equipment on the top of the vehicle..

Radio Remotes: For easy unlocking doors, opening doors and lowering lifts.

Wheel Chair Ramps: Installed ramps that allow easier access for chair into vans.

Some inexpensive easy to install adaptations are:

Car Caddie: A portable handle that attaches to the window like a grab bar which, may be helpful when entering and exiting the vehicle.

HandyBar: Is a personal support handle that hooks into a metal loop on the car's doorframe.

Swivel Seat Cushion: helps when twisting in or out of the car seat.

Transfer boards: Help one slide from a wheelchair into the car seat without placing stress on the knees or hips.

Oversized, wide-angle mirrors: Give a better view on either side or rear view of your vehicle.